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SHY AIRLINE GETS HONOR FOR VALOR

Air America, Inc., Believed an Arm of C.I.A. in Asia

By EVERT CLARK
Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, May 24—An executive of the world's shyest airline received an award today for his company's achievements "under extremely trying political conditions" in Southeast Asia.

The airline, Air America, Inc., is widely reputed to be an air arm of the Central Intelligence Agency in Asia and elsewhere.

It does not advertise and its primary customers are the United States armed forces and aid missions.

Neither the executive, George A. Doole Jr., nor the Aero Club of Washington, which gave him the award, will confirm that there is any relationship between the airline and the C.I.A. The agency was no more communicative.

"One wouldn't know" if a particular contract to haul cargo or passengers was actually for C.I.A. work, Mr. Doole said. "If that were the case, they wouldn't tell me, would they?"

Brief Word of Thanks

The award is given monthly to a club member for "some noteworthy aviation achievement or act." Mr. Doole accepted it with a brief word of thanks at a luncheon in the Washington Hotel.

A citation accompanying the award said the "extremely sensitive political conditions" in Southeast Asia made it "essential that a nonmilitary air service be used, even under conditions of actual warfare."

It noted that "a number of Air America planes have been downed."

For some years, planes of Air America and related companies have had the risky job of supplying remote refugee camps and American outposts in such places as the Laotian and Vietnamese jungles. Newspaper accounts show that planes and helicopters frequently are shot down and the crews killed or captured.

More recently, the company has also been maintaining and repairing many of the American fighter planes being used in Vietnam.

Brig. Gen. Joseph P. Adams, a past president of the Aero Club and chairman of its awards committee, said Air America has about 8,000 employes, 500 pilots and 16 types of aircraft.

Notes High Risk

In presenting the award, General Adams noted there is "a high risk of life in this operation," and said, "Air America has met this challenge."

Mr. Doole is managing director and chief executive officer of Air America. He is also president of the Pacific Corporation, which wholly owns Air America, he said. Both are American companies.

Air America, in turn, wholly owns a Chinese aviation engineering company, the Air Asia Company, Ltd., in Taiwan. The Pacific Corporation also owns 40 per cent of Civil Air Transport Company, Ltd., a Taiwan-based airline that works closely with Air Asia and Air America, both in contract flights and in maintenance of American fighters.

Mr. Doole said Air America was "a contract carrier, operating in a variety of places in the world, but particularly active now in Southeast Asia."

He said his company contracted "to anybody, all comers, anyone who wants a load of materials lifted from here to there." In Asia, most of the work is for the military services or aid missions he said.

Mr. Doole protested after the luncheon that the citation might have been "a little flamboyant."

General Adams, asked if Air America worked for the C.I.A., said:

"They may do some things we don't know about. But they couldn't very well have a secret operation with 469 pilots, 8,000 employes and all that. Now some of the missions—that's a horse of another color. I wouldn't know about that. Nothing I have here indicates anything like that.

"We just decided he (Mr. Doole) was the outstanding member for the month of April."

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By Evert Clark

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An account of ceremony of the Aero Club of Washington at which an award was given to Mr. George A. Doole, Jr. of Air America, Inc.

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